The Ritual Ablutions for Women

Taharatu 'N-Nisa'

A Comprehensive book on the shari'ah laws pertaining to the ritual ablutions for women according to the Shi'ite (Jafa'ari) school of Jurisprudence (fiqh)

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PREFACE

Knowing the laws regarding the monthly periods and pre- or post-natal bleeding is an essential duty of every Muslim woman. But the unavailability of a comprehensive book in English on this subject has made the access to these laws almost impossible for those Muslim women who are unfamiliar with Arabic, Persian or Urdu. One reason for the unavailability of such a book in English is that in many Muslim communities, open discussion of this and similar subjects were tabooed. This, plus the complication of the laws of menstruation (which arises from the vast differences in the patterns of women's menstrual cycles) may have discouraged many writers from dealing with this subject comprehensively.

The present writer, by putting his trust in Allah, has tried to accomplish this task and has simplified, to his utmost ability, the laws of the *shari'ah* regarding the women in their monthly periods.

This book consists of three parts:

1. Menstruation.

2. Irregular Bleeding.

3. Post-natal Bleeding.

The last two parts are to be read as normally. But as far as the first part is concerned, the reader is requested to read the following instruction which will help her from getting confused.

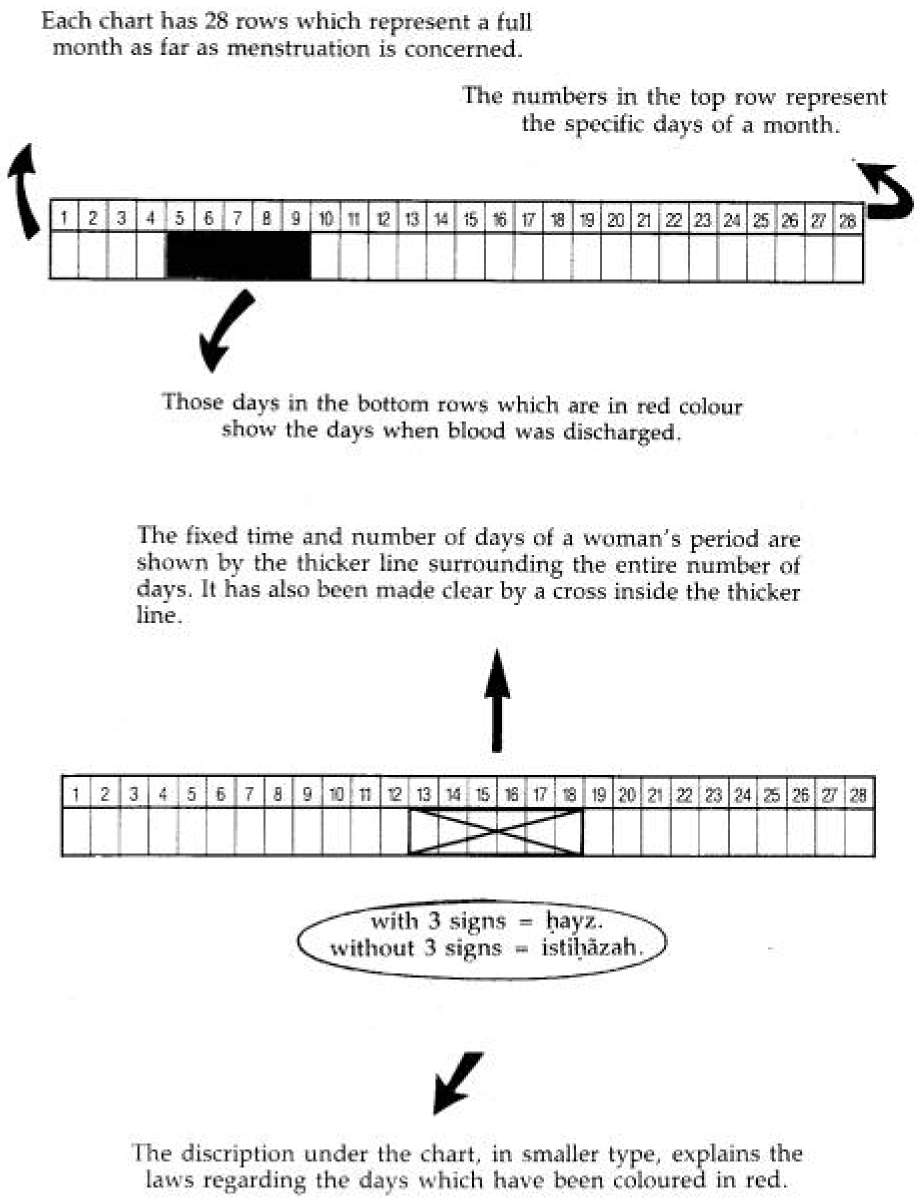
There are three stages of reading the first part of this book:

Firstly, you are adviced to read the first four chapters (pp. 1-7) . In the fourth chapter you will find the definitions of different categories of women in their monthly periods. In this chapter, find the appropriate category to which you belong.

Secondly, proceed to read only one of the next four chapters (chps. 5-8) which is about your appropriate category. At this stage do not read the laws and problems of the women in other categories otherwise you will get confused.

Thirdly, read the last four chapters (chps. 9-12).

In chapter six of part I, have given some charts to simplify the laws. To understand the charts, please read the following:

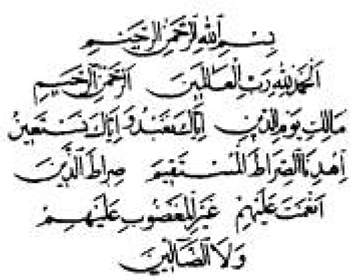


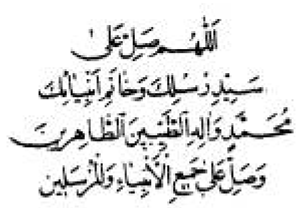
An index has been added to enable the readers to find those minor but important laws which could not be accomodated under an individual heading.

At the end, I thank Allah for giving me an opportunity to serve His chosen religion, and may He accept this humble work from one of His most humble servants.

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INTRODUCTION





Menstruation is a natural process which takes place in woman's body every month. Before explaining the laws of the *shari'ah* about menstruation, it seems appropriate to discuss, in short, that why does this take place?

Allah has created the woman such that she plays the major role in the perpetuation of the human race. The primary reproductive organs of a woman are her ovaries. When a girl is born, her ovaries already contain about 400,000 immature eggs (which are known as ova). At puberty, the eggs start maturing, usually one ovum each month. The maturing of the ovum takes place roughly halfway between two menstrual cycles. After maturing, it finds its way from the ovary to the fallopian tube and ends up in the womb.

Meanwhile the womb (while preparing for the possible arrival of a fertilized egg) develops a thick, soft, velvety lining which is made up mostly of blood vessels.

This thick, soft lining in the womb is called endometrium.

If an egg is fertilized, it will be embedded in endometrium and continues its growth. But if no egg is fertilized, the endometrium (i.e. the lining of the womb) is no longer needed and is shed or discarded. This process of discarding the endometrium is known as menstruation.

From this biological explanation it is clear that menstruation is neither "the curse" on woman nor a result of the so-called original sin of Eve. Rather it is a very normal biological process that ensures the perpetuation of the human race.

Of course, some women feel uncomfortable a few days before and during menstruation. This discomfort is caused by some of the biological changes which

take place in the woman's body. Allah says, *They ask you about menstruation. (O Muhammad), tell them that menstruation is a discomfort for the women, (it is a period when they pass through physical and emotional tension.)* (2:222)

In this part of the book I intend, by putting my trust in Allah, to explain the Islamic laws *(shari'ah)* regarding the women who are in their monthly periods. First the definition of menstruation, its signs and its duration will be discussed; then comes the different categories of women who are in menstruation; followed by four chapters on the laws about the women in each category; and finally the acts which are forbidden to a woman during her periods and the manner of *ghusl* are explained.

2. DEFINITION OF HAYZ

There are four possible causes for discharge of blood from women:

1. Menstruation.

2. Loss of virginity.

3. Post-natal bleeding.

4. Internal injury.

As mentioned above, menstruation is different from the blood of group 2, 3, and 4. In the Islamic legal terminology, menstruation is known as *hayz.* And a woman who is having her period is known as *haiz*. [1]

According to Islamic laws, menstruation is the process of discarding the endometrium which normally takes place once a month in women from the day they attain puberty until they reach the age of menopause. (Menopause = final cessation of menstruation.)

From the *shari'ah* point of view, a girl attains puberty at the age of nine lunar years, [2] and she reaches menopause at the age of fifty. Imam Ja'far as-Sddiq (upon whom be peace) said, "The age when a woman ceases to have menstruation is fifty years." [3]

So, if a girl sees blood before she becomes nine years old by lunar calendar, that blood is not considered menstruation (even if it may be regarded menstruation from the biological point of view). In the same way, if a woman sees blood after the age of fifty that blood will not be considered menstruation.

If a girl who does not know whether she has become nine years old sees blood on herself, then that blood cannot be considered menstruation even if it has all its three signs. (See below for the three signs of menstruation.) On the other hand, if a woman who doubts whether or not she has reached the age of menopause sees blood, then she should consider it as menstruation.

If a woman who has reached the age of menopause (i.e., fifty years) sees blood on herself with the three signs of menstruation or at the fixed time of her monthly

periods, then what should she do? For such a woman, it is precautionarily wajib to act on precaution up to the age of sixty. Any blood seen after the age of sixty will be considered *istihazah.* (See part II for *istihazah.)*

"Acting on precaution" means to refrain from those things which are forbidden to a *ha'iz* and perform those things which are required of a woman in *istihazah.*

According to the *shari'ah,* it is possible for a pregnant woman and a nursing mother to have menstruation.

The Signs: If a woman is not sure about the nature of her discharge, then she should look for the following three signs of the menstrual blood: (a) warmth; (b) dark red or black colour; (c) pressure and slight burning in the discharge. If these three signs are found together, then it is menstruation.

These signs have been taken from a hadith of Imam Ja'far as-Sddiq (peace be upon him). A woman came to him and asked, "What should a woman do who sees blood on herself but does not know whether it is menstruation or some other type (of blood)?" The Imam said, "The blood of menstruation is warm ...black (or dark-coloured), and it has pressure and burning sensation..." The woman said, "By Allah! If he had been a woman, he could not have added anything further in this (description)!" [4]

3. DURATION OF HAYZ

The beginning of menstruation is determined when blood leaves the uterus and enters the vagina. It is necessary for the commencement of menstruation that the blood should be seen outside the vagina.

In another hadith, Imam as-Sadiq said, "The minimum duration of menstruation is three days, and the maximum is ten days." [5]

By "three days" we mean three days and the two nights between the first and the third day. For example, if blood starts on Monday morning and stops on Wednesday evening, then it is menstruation. And by "ten days" we mean ten days and the nine nights between the first and the tenth day.

So, if a woman sees blood for less than three days, it is not considered *hayz.* If the blood is seen for more than ten days, the ten days will be counted as menstruation and the blood seen after that will be regarded as *istihazah.*

The same Imam said, "The minimum duration of purity (between two menstrual cycles) must be (at least) ten days." [6] So if a woman sees blood during the ten days after her period had ended, it will not be considered *hayz.*

Although it is normal to say that menstruation takes place once "a month", but it should be clarified that menstrual cycles take place every 28 days - so, in the present context "a month" means a period of 28 days, not 29, 30 or 31 days.

4. DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF HA'IZ

According to the *shari'ah,* all the women are not same as far as the rules of menstruation are concerned. By taking into consideration the difference in regularity of time and days of monthly periods and their irregularity, women can be divided into three main groups:

1. *Mubtadi'ah:*literally, a beginner; in the present context it means a girl who sees menstruation for the first time.

2. *Zatu 'l-'adah:*a woman who has menstruation regularly at a fixed time or for a fixed number of days or both. If a woman has two consequent periods with regularity in time of their occurance and duration, then she is a *zatu 'l-'adah = a* woman who has formed a fixed pattern for her monthly periods.

On the other hand, if a *zatu 'l-'adah* woman discovers that her fixed pattern for menstruation has changed and this happens for two consequent months, then she should follow the new pattern.

The *zatu 'l-'adah* women can be of three types:

(a) a woman whose periods occur at a fixed time and for a fixed number of days. For example, on 1st of every month and lasts for 7 days continuously or with a pause on the fourth day.

(b) a woman whose periods occur at a fixed time but not for a fixed number of days. For example, on 1st of every month but sometimes for 4 days and at other times for 5 days.

(c) a woman whose periods occur for a fixed number of days but not at a fixed time. For example, she has her periods for 4 days but not at a fixed time, sometimes on 1st and sometimes on 4th of every month.

3. Muztaribah:a woman who does not have her periods with regularity. For example, a woman has her one period on the 1st of the month for five days and her second on the 5th of the month for three days and her third period on the 10th of the month for four days. *Muztaribah* here means a woman who has an irregular pattern for her monthly periods.

5. A GIRL ENTERING PUBERTY

The girl who reaches the age of puberty and sees her menstruation for the first time is known as *mubtadi'ah = the* beginner.

If a *mubtadi'ah* sees blood with the three signs for more than three and less than ten days, then it is menstruation.

But if a *mubtadi'ah* sees blood for more than ten days, then there are a few possibilites:

1. The blood was with the three signs for some days and without them for some other days, then the former is menstruation and the latter *is istihazah.*

2. The blood had the three signs during the entire flow but with a difference in intensity of colour, that is, some days it had black colour and some other days it had red or dark red colour. In this case the flow with black colour will be considered menstruation and the other will be considered *istihazah.*

3. If the entire flow was without the three signs or the flow with the three signs was less than three days, then the entire flow will be considered *istihazah.*

4. If the blood had the three signs during the entire flow, then the *mubtadi'ah* has to follow the numberpattern of the women in her family, e.g., her mother, sister, etc. That is, if her mother's monthly period comes for six days, then she should consider the six days as menstruation and the remaining days as *istihazah.*

But if the women in a beginner's family differ in the number-pattern of their monthly periods, then during the first month she should observe six or seven days as menstruation and act on precaution up to the tenth day. In the subsequent months she should observe the first three days as menstruation and act on precaution up to sixth or seventh day. This alternate pattern should be continued until she forms a fixed pattern of her own.

If a girl loses her virginity and blood is discharged so much that she is uncertain whether the blood is from the loss of virginity or menstruation or both, then she should examine herself "by inserting a piece of cotton inside her vagina and leave it there for a while. Then she should take it out gently - if the blood has just stained the outside of the cotton, then it is from the loss of virginity; but if the blood has penetrated into the cotton, then it is menstruation." [7]

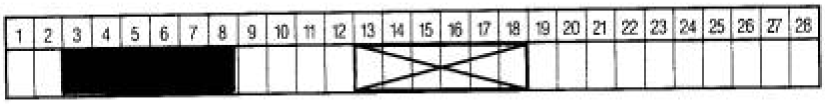
If she is unable to examine herself, then she should consider herself whatever she was before losing virginity - either she was pure from menstruation or not.

6. GENERAL RULES ABOUT *ZATU 'L-`ADAH* WOMEN

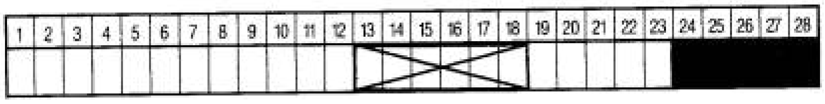
The *zatu 'l-'adah* women in groups (a) and (b) have to observe the rules of menstruation as soon as they see the blood. It makes no difference whether it starts on the fixed day, or one or two days before it or after it, even if it does not have all the three signs of menstrual flow. Of course, if she discovers that it was not menstruation (for example, the blood stopped on the second day), then she will have to perform her *salat* (which she had missed during the two days) as *qaza.*

The *zatu 'l-adah* women in group (c) have to observe the rules of menstruation if the blood has all the three signs of menstrual flow mentioned above. If the discharge does not have all the three signs, then it will not be regarded as menstruation.

When a *zatu 'l-'adah* woman sees blood many days before or after the fixed time then if it has the three signs altogether, it is menstruation; otherwise it will be regarded as *istihazah.*

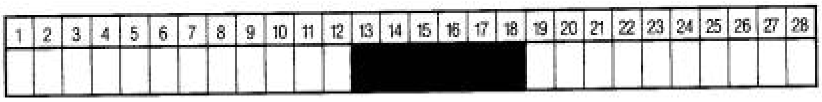


with 3 signs = hayz.
without 3 signs = *istihazah*.



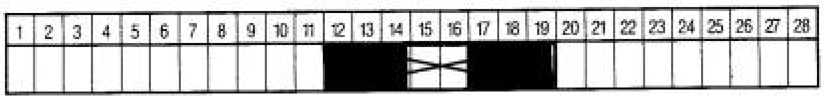
with 3 signs = hayz.
without 3 signs = *istihazah*.

But as mentioned above, if a *zatu 'l-'adah* woman sees blood during the fixed time, it is *hayz* even if it does not have the three signs.



with or without 3 signs = hayz.

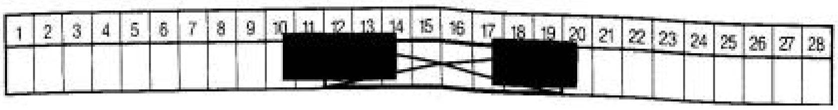
If a *zatu 'l-'adah* woman sees blood for three days and then it stops for some days and again it comes for three more days - then both flows of blood and the pause between them will be considered *hayz* only if (a) the total days of two flows and the pause between them is not more than ten, and (b) all these days are in the fixed time and fixed number of days of the woman's menses.



if total of 2 flows & the pause is ten or less + all these days are in
the fixed time = hayz.

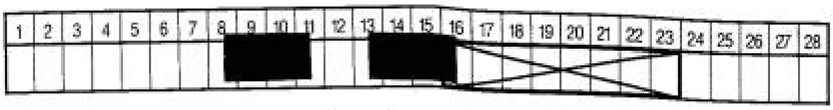
In the following three cases also, the two flows of blood and the pause between them will be counted as hayz:

i. If one of the flows started a day or two before the fixed time.



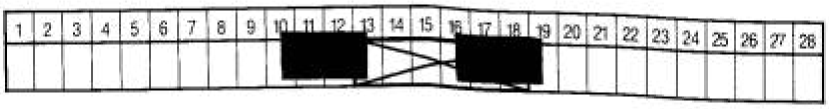
both flows and the pause = hayz.

ii. If both flows started outside the fixed time but both had the three signs of menstrual flow.



with 3 signs - hayz.
without 3 signs = *istihazah*.

iii. If one flow (which started outside the fixed time) had the three signs while the other flow started in the fixed time.

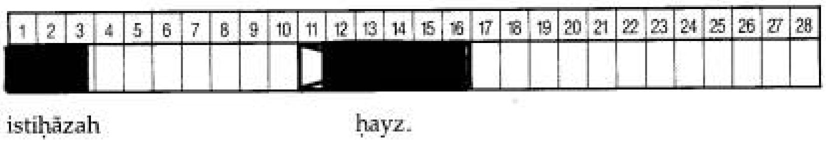


with 3 signs = hayz.
without 3 signs = *istihazah*.

But if one flow or both did not have the three signs of menstruation and none of them occured in the fixed time, then the flow with the three signs is menstruation and without them is *istihazah.*

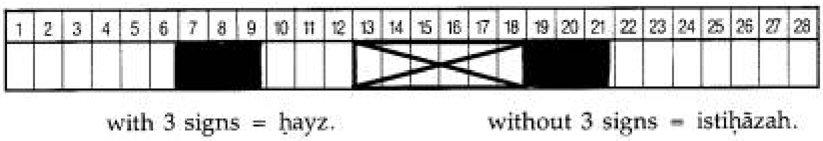
If the total days of both flows is more than ten and the pause between them is less than ten days, then the following procedure is to be followed:

i. If one of the flows was in the fixed time without the other, the one within the fixed time will be considered *hayz* and the other one *istihazah.*

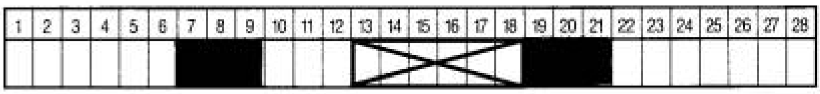


ii. In the case where none of the flows occurred in the fixed time, then

(a) if one had the three signs but not the other - the one with the signs will be *hayz* and the other *istihazah.*



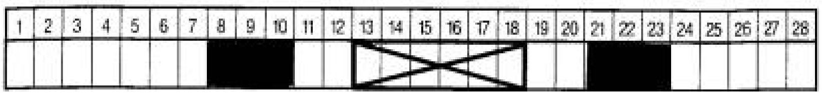
(b) if both flows had the three signs, then the first will be considered *hayz* and the other will be considered *istihazah.*



first—with 3 signs = ḥayz. second—with 3 signs = istiḥāzah.

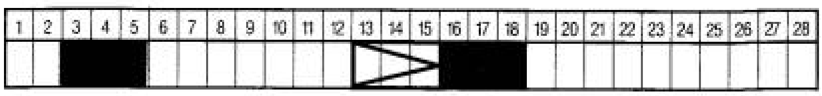
If the pause between the two flows of blood was ten days or more, then in the following two cases they will be considered two separate menstruations:

i. if both flows had the three signs:



with 3 signs = two separate hayz.
without 3 signs = two separate *istihazah*.

ii. if one was in the fixed time, while the other had the three signs.



with 3 signs = ḥayz.
without 3 signs = istiḥāzah.

with 3 signs = ḥayz.
without 3 signs = ḥayz.

If these blood flows occured outside the fixed time and without the three signs, then both will be counted as *istihazah.*

If the blood stops before ten days and the woman is uncertain whether or not it has stopped completely, then she should examine herself by inserting a piece of cotton inside her vagina and leave it there for a while. Then she should take it out gently - if the cotton comes out dry, she should consider herself pure and perform *ghuslu 'l-hayz (unless* the pause during menstrual flow is normal in her case).

While examining oneself, it is better "to stand upright leaning on a wall, etc, and lift up one leg and then insert the cotton into the vagina." [8]

If such a woman (who is uncertain whether or not her period has stopped completely) does not examine herself and performs *ghuslu 'l-hayz,* then her *ghusl is* valid only if the menstrual flow does not start again.

And if she is unable to examine herself, then she should consider herself *ha'iz* until she is sure of her purity.

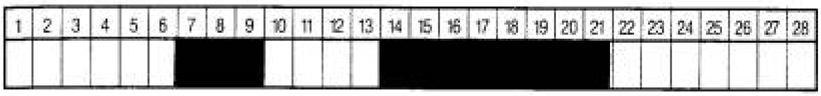
But if the cotton comes out stained with blood, the rules differ slightly for the different categories of *ha'iz:*

If a *mubtadi'ah,* a *muztaribah* and a *zatu 'l-adah* who has her periods for 10 days examine themselves and find that the cotton is stained, then they should consider themselves as *ha'iz* up to ten days or until the blood stops.

If a woman who has her periods regularly for less than ten days examines herself during her fixed numbers of days and finds the cotton stained, then she should consider herself *ha'iz.* If the same woman examines herself outside her fixed numbers of days and finds the cotton stained, she should consider herself as *ha'iz* for up to ten days or until she finds herself pure.

If a *zatu 'l-'adah* woman of group (c) sees blood for more than ten days, then she should consider her fixed number of days as menstruation (even if it is without the three signs); and the remaining days should be considered as *istihazah*(even if it is with the three signs).

But if both flows can be counted as one *hayz,* then she should do so. For example, she saw her first flow according to her pattern for three days, then blood stopped for four days and started again (with the three signs) for three days (making a total of ten days) and then continued (without the three signs) afterwards - then she would count the first flow + intervening pause + second flow of three days (with the signs) as *hayz* and the remaining period as *istihazah.*



first flow + pause + second flow with 3 signs = 1 hayz.
later part of 2nd flow without 3 signs = *istihazah*.

7. THE FORGETFUL *ZATU 'L-'ADAH* WOMEN

1. If a woman who has her periods on fixed number of days but not on fixed time (group c) forgets the duration of her menses, then she has to act as follows:

She has the menstrual flow for three or more days, then all those days will be considered as *hayz* if they are not more than ten.

But if they are more than ten, then the number of days which she considers as the probable duration of her menses should be counted as *hayz* and the remaining days will be counted as *istihazah.* And if the "probable duration of her menses" is more than seven days, then she should act on precaution from the last probable day up to the tenth day.

2. A woman who has a fixed time for the occurance of her periods (group b) forgets that fixed time:

If she has the menstrual flow for three or more days, then all those days will be considered as *hayz* if they are not more than ten.

In the case the days are more than ten, and if she knows on the whole that the bleeding has coincided with her fixed time - then she should act on precaution for the whole period of the flow even if the blood does not have the three signs of menses.

But if she does not know even generally that the bleeding has coincided with her fixed time, then there are two possibilities:

i. The blood flow had the three signs for some days and did not have the three signs for some other days - then the days with the three signs will be considered as *hayz* if they are not more than ten, and the other days will be considered as *istihazah.*

ii. The blood had the three signs during the entire flow or for more than ten days, then six or seven days should be considered as *hayz* and the remaining as *istihazah.* In this case it is precautionarily better for her to act on precaution up to the tenth day.

3. A woman who has a fixed time for the occurance of her periods and a fixed number of days for its duration (group a) forgets her fixed time or fixed number of days or both, then there are a few possibilities:

(a) She forgot the fixed time but remembers the fixed number of days: If she has the menstrual flow for three or more days, then all those days will be considered *hayz* if they are not more than ten.

In case the bleeding continues for more than ten, and she knows on the whole that the bleeding has coincided with the fixed time - then she should act on precaution for the whole period of the flow even if the blood does not have the three signs of menses.

But if she does not know even generally that the bleeding has coincided with the fixed time, then she should consider the fixed number of days (which she remembers) as menstruation and the remaining days as *istihazah.*

(b) She forgot her fixed number of days but remembers the fixed time of occurance: The blood she sees at the fixed time -with or without the three signswill be considered menstruation if it is not for more than ten days. If it comes for more than ten days, then she should consider the probable number of days from the fixed time as menstruation and the remaining days as *istihazah.* And in this case if the probable number of days is more than seven, then she should act on precaution up to the tenth day.

(c) She forgot both the fixed time and the fixed number of days of her monthly periods:

i. if the blood has three signs and it came for not less than three and not more than ten days, then all of it will be regarded as *hayz.* If it exceeds ten days, then the days she considers as the probable days of her monthly period will be considered as *hayz* and the remaining days as *istihazah.* Again in this case if the probable period is more than seven, then it is better for her to act on precaution up to the tenth day.

ii. if the blood is with the three signs for some days but without them for some other days -the former will be menstruation and the latter *istihazah.* Of course, if both these flows are not more than ten days, then it is better for her to act on precaution on the days when the blood is without the three signs.

iii. If the blood comes for ten days or more than ten days and the woman knows on the whole that the bleeding has coincided with her fixed time and number of days, then she should act on precaution for the entire period - even if the blood did not have the three signs.

8. THE *MUZTARIBAH*

If a *muztaribah* sees blood with the three signs for more than three and less than ten days, then it is menstruation.

But if a *muztaribah* sees blood for more than ten days, then there are a few possibilites:

1. The blood had the three signs during the entire flow, then she should consider six or seven days as menstruation and the remaining days as *istihazah.*

2. The blood had the three signs during the entire flow but with a difference in intensity of colour, that is, some days it had black colour and some other days it had dark red colour. In this case the flow with black colour will be considered menstruation and the other will be considered *istihazah - if* such dark colour was not less than three and not more than ten days.

3. The blood was with the three signs for some days (but not less than three and not more than ten days) and without the signs for some other days, then the flow with the three signs is menstruation and without them *is istihazah.*

4. If the entire flow was without the three signs or the flow with the three signs was less than three days, then the entire flow will be considered *istihazah.*

9. THE THINGS FORBIDDEN TO THE HA'IZ

I have already mentioned that menstruation is neither a "curse on the women" nor is it related to the so-called original sin of Eve.

Menstruation is the flow of blood; and blood, according to the *shari'ah, is* a *najis* (unclean) substance and so menstruation is also considered *najis.* But the impurity of menstruation in no way prevents a woman from living a normal life with her family and friends.

A person asked Imam ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about a woman who gives water to a man while she is in her monthly period. The Imam said, "One of the wives of the Prophet (upon whom be peace) was pouring water on him and serving him drink while she was in her monthly period." In another tradition, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him) narrates that the Prophet (upon whom be peace) said to one of his wives, "Serve me a drink." She said, "I am in my monthly

period." The Prophet said, "Is your menstruation in your hand?!" [9] These two narrations are sufficient to show that the impurity of menstruation does not prevent a woman from living a normal life with her family and friends.

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On the other hand, there are certain acts of worship, etc., in Islam which are so sacred that a Muslim, whether man or woman, cannot perform them unless he or she has certain qualifications. It is only in relation to these acts that the women who are in menstruation, just as the *junub* men, are forbidden from performing them. Those acts are as follows:

1. Touching the writings of the Qur'an, the names and attributes of Allah, the names of the Prophet, the Imams and Fatimah (the daughter of the Prophet). It is better not to touch names of other prophets too.

2. Reciting those verses of the Qur'an in which *sajdah* (prostration) *is wajib,* i.e., verse 15 of chapter 32; verse 37 of chapter 41; verse 62 of chapter 53; and verse 19 of chapter 96. It is better not to recite even a single verse from these chapters.

3. Staying or even entering in a mosque. One can pass through the mosques [10] (by entering from one door and leaving from the other) except the Masjidu l-Haram (the Sacred Mosque at Mecca), Masjidu 'n-Nabi (the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina), and the shrines of the Imams - a *ha'iz* woman cannot even pass through these places.

As she is not allowed to enter any mosque, naturally she cannot do circumambulation *(tawaf)* of Ka'bah, nor can she observe *i'tikaf.* [11]

4. Putting something in a mosque - even if she is standing outside. But she may take out something from it - provided she does not enter it.

5. A woman who is in her periods is excused from *salat* (prayers) because she does not have an important qualification for *salat,* i.e., *taharat* (cleanliness). She does not even have to perform them later on as *qaza.* Imam 'Ali Raza (peace be upon him) said, "When a woman has her monthly period, she does not ...pray because she is in the state of impurity (of blood), and Allah likes to be worshipped only by a pure (tahir) person..." [12]

6. Likewise a *ha'iz* woman is excused from fasting; but in this case, she has to fast after the month of Ramadhdn as *qaza.* In his answer to Abu Basir's question, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq said, "Fasting is just for a month in a year while salat is every day and night. That is why Allah ordered that the fasts (missed by a *ha'iz* in Ramadan) be repaid as *qaza*, while He did not order to perform *qaza* of the salats (missed during *hayz). "* [13]

It is *mustahab* for a *ha'iz* to change her sanitary napkin at the time of every prayer, to do wudu', to sit on her *musalla* facing the *qiblah* and to recite du'as; it is better to recite *tasbihat arba'ah. (Tasbihat arba'ah* are as follows: *subhan Allahi; wa 'l-hamdu li 'l-lahi; wa la ilaha illa 'lahu; wa 'la-lahu akbar.)*

It *is makruh* for a *ha'iz* to recite, to keep, to carry or to touch the border of the pages of the Qur'an, or the blank space between the lines.

At the end of this chapter I would like to present the following verses from the Bible so that the reader may appreciate the laws of the *shari'ah.* The Bible, in the Book of Leviticus, says,
"When a woman has a discharge, her discharge being blood from her body, she shall remain in her impurity for seven days; whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Anything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; and anything that she sits on shall be unclean. Anyone who touches her bedding shall wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; and anyone who touches any object on which she has sat shall wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening. Be it the bedding or be it the object on which she has sat, on touching it he shall be unclean until evening. And if a man lies with her, her impurity is communicated to him; he shall be unclean seven days, and any bedding on which he lies shall become unclean.

"When she becomes clean of her discharge, she shall count off seven days, and after that she shall be clean. On the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, and bring them to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. The priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering; and the priest shall make expiation on her behalf, for her unclean discharge, before the Lord." (Lev. 15:19-30)

Now surely you will appreciate the words of Allah which say, *Allah does not desire to make any impediment for you; He only desires to purify you, and that He may complete His blessings upon you; haply you will be thankful (to Him).* (Qur'an 5:6)

10. SEX DURING MENSTRUATION

By considering the discomfort of the women during the monthly periods, Islam has forbidden both the husband and the wife from sexual intercourse during the menstruation.

The Qur'an says, *They ask you about menstruation. (O Muhammad) tell (them that) menstruation is a discomfort (for the women, it is a period when they pass through physical and emotional tension. Therefore,) do not establish sexual relations with them during the menses, and (again you are reminded that) do not approach them (sexually) until the blood stops. Then when they have cleansed themselves, you (are permitted to) go into them as Allah has commanded you (by placing sexual urge in your nature).* (2:222)

Of course, playing with the other parts of her body (other than the vagina and anus) is allowed. Again, it is precautionarily better not to play with her body between the navel and knees.
If a man who is engaged in sexual intercourse with his wife discovers that her period has began, then he should immediately withdraw himself from her.

It is clear from the verse mentioned above *(until the blood stops)* that once the blood has stopped, intercourse becomes lawful even if the woman has not performed *ghuslu 'l-hayz.* But on the basis of the subsequent sentence *(then when they have cleansed themselves...),* most of the *fuqaha'* (Islamic jurists) have ruled that it is precautionarily better to refrain from intercourse until she performs *ghusl* or, at least, washes her private parts.

'Ali bin Yaqtin asked Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him) about a man having intercourse with his wife whose period has stopped but she has still not performed the *ghusl.* The Imam said, "There is no harm in it; but (intercourse) after the *ghusl* is more preferable to me.` [14]

11. THE *SALAT* BEFORE & AFTER THE MENSES

Whenever a *mubtadi'ah,* a *muztaribah* or a forgetful *zatu 'l-'adah* woman sees blood, she should stop her *salat* - of course, if she discovers later on that it was not *hayz* (e.g., the blood stopped on the second day), then she should perform *qaza* of the *salat* which she had missed.

If the time for a particular *salat* has already begun and a woman fears that by delaying the *salat* her period may start, then it *is wajib* on her to perform that *salat* immediately.

If the time for a particular *salat* has already begun and the woman did not pray until her period started, then she has to perform that *salat* as *qaza* after the menstruation stops and she becomes clean.

If a woman's period starts while she is engaged in *salat,* her prayer will be invalid.

If a woman who is engaged in *salat* doubts whether or not her period has started, her doubt will have no effect on the *salat* unless she discovers later on that her period had actually begun.

If a woman becomes pure from menstruation and has enough time to perform *ghuslu 'l-hayz* and pray, at least, one *rak'at* in time - then it *is wajib* on her to do so. In case she does not pray, then it will be *wdjib* on her to perform its *qaza*.

For example, the time of *'asr* prayer was ending at 5:00 p.m. and a woman became pure from her period at 4:00 p.m. In this case, she has enough time to perform *ghuslu 'l-hayz* and pray *salat* of *'asr.* If she does not do so, then it will be wajib for her to perform *salat* of *`asr* as *qaza*.

If a woman becomes pure from menstruation while she does not have enough time to perform *ghusl* and pray at least one *rak'at* in time - then it is precautionarily obligatory for her to perform *tayammum* instead of *ghusl,* and pray. But in this case if she does not do so, then it is not wajib for her to perform that *salat* as *qaza*.

12. GHUSL U'L-HAYZ

When a woman becomes pure from menstruation, it is wdjib for her to perform *ghusl.* Apart from sexual intercourse, all the acts forbidden to her will remain so until she performs *ghusl u'l-hayz.*

The manner of performing *ghuslu 'l-hayz is* same as the method explained in *Wudu' & Ghusl.* For convenience of the reader, the manner of performing *ghusl* is also given here.

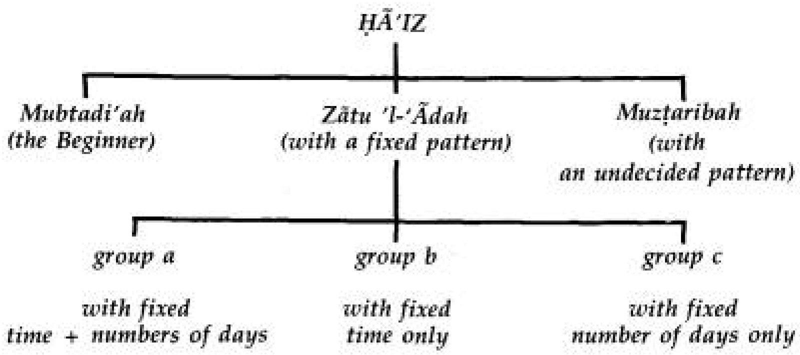
There are two methods of performing *ghusl: Ghusl tartibi* and *ghusl irtimasi.*

1. *Ghusl Tartibi:* After removing the *najasat* from the body and after *niyyat,* the body has to be washed in three stages: First, the head and the neck; then the right side of the body from the shoulders to the foot; and lastly, the left side of the body.

2. *Ghusl Irtimasi:* In this type of *ghusl,* after *niyyat,* the whole body should be completely immersed in water at once, not gradually. One has to make sure that all the parts of his body, including the skin under the hair, has been washed.

However, *ghusl tartibi is* preferred to *ghusl irtimasi.*

For other details about the manner of performing *ghusl,* see pp. 16-20of *Wudu' & Ghusl.*



Notes:

[1] To make the pronounciation easier for the readers, I have departed from the standard transliteration method of writing ض as d; instead I have used z. For example, instead of *haid* and *hayd, I* have written *ha'iz* and *hayz* respectively.

[2] Nine years according to the Islamic (lunar) calendar would be eight years and nine months according to the Gregorian (solar) calendar.

[3] al-'Amili, Shaykh Muhammad bin Hasan al-Hurr, *Wasa'ilu 'sh-Shi'ah, (kitabu 't-Taharah),* (ed. 'Abdu 'r-Ralum ash-ShirdA) vol. 2, Tehran 1401 AH, p. 580.

[4] *Ibid, p. 537.*

[5] *Ibid, p. 551.*

[6] *Ibid, p. 554.*

[7] As explained by Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him) to Khalaf bin Hammad al-Kufi. See al-'Amili, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 535.

[8] As explained by imam as-Sadiq. See al-'Amili, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 562.

[9] al-'Amili, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 595.

[10] It is necessary to clarify that mosque, i.e., *masjid, is* different from the religious centres built by the Shi'ahs in the memory of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) which are usually known as *Husayniyyah, Imambargah* or *Imambara.*

[11] *I'tikaf* means to fast and stay in a mosque for at least three days with the intention of worshipping Allah.

[12] *Ibid,* p. 586.

[13] *Ibid,* p. 591.

[14] *Ibid*, p. 573.

ISTIHAZAH - THE IRREGULAR BLEEDING

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1. DEFINITION OF *ISTIHAZAH*

You have come across the word *istihazah*many times in the first part of this book. In this part we shall exclusively discuss about *istihazah.*

Istahadah is usually translated as "irregular menstruation". But this translation is incorrect, because it may create a confusion with *muztaribah = "a* woman whose menstrual pattern is irregular"; and also because *istihazah is* not menstruation at all. In Islamic terminology *istihazah*means any blood discharged from women which is not from menstruation, loss of virginity, postnatal bleeding or internal injury. The woman who has *istihazah is* known as *mustahazah.*

The signs: *Istihazah*usually has the following four signs:

1. it is cool,

2. yellow in colour,

3. thin in substance, and

4. it is discharged without pressure or burning sensation.

All these signs are opposite the signs of menstruation.

Although these are the signs which usually appear in *istihazah,* sometimes it is quite possible for it to appear without some or all of them.

Unlike *hayz,* there is no minimum or maximum limit for the discharge of *istihazah.* Neither is there any specific time in a woman's life-time during which it appears -it can come before a girl becomes nine years old and after a woman has entered the age of menopause. Nor is there a minimum duration between the occurance of two *istihazah.*

2. THREE TYPES OF *ISTIHAZAH*

By considering the amount of blood in *istihazah,* it is divided into three categories: *Qalilah, Mutawassitah* and *Kathirah.*

1. *Qalilah = Slight Bleeding**:* The discharge which stains the cotton but does not penetrate into it.

2. Mutawassitah = Medium Bleeding: The discharge which penetrates into the cotton but does not flow out from it.

3. Kathirah = Profuse Bleeding: The discharge which penetrates into the cotton and flows out from it.

In *istihazah*it is possible for the discharge to change from one level to another; for example, in the beginning it was *qalfiah* and then it became *kathirah,* or vice verse.

It is obvious that if a *mustahazah*woman wants to follow the rules of *istihazah,* she must examine herself to determine whether she *is qallah, mutawassitah* or *kathirah.*

3. THE PRAYERS OF THE *MUSTAHAZAH*

*Istihazah*is a *najasat* (impurity) which is different from *hayz.* The woman in *istihazah is* not exempted from prayers. She has to pray, but the validity of her prayers depends on fulfilling the acts which are required of her.

In this chapter we shall explain the rules which a *mustahazah*has to observe daily for her salats.

The Qalilah:

A woman with *istihazahqalilah* has to change the sanitary napkin or towel and perform wudu' for each and every salat whether it is wajib or mustahab.

In this and the subsequent cases, if the sanitary napkin has not become najis, then it is not necessary to change it.

The Mutawassitah:

A woman with *istihazah mutawassitah* has to change the sanitary napkin, perform wudu' for every salat and perform in addition a ghusl before the dawn prayer.

If the medium bleeding of *istihazah*starts after the dawn prayer, then on that day it is wajib on the *mustahazah*to perform a ghusl before the noon prayer. And if it starts after the noon and afternoon prayers, then it is wajib on her to do the ghusl before the evening prayer.

If the medium bleeding of *istihazah*starts after noon prayer (and before afternoon prayer) or after evening prayer (and before night prayer), then it is wajib on her to perform the ghusl before afternoon or night prayer.

In the same way, if a woman sees *istihazah mutawassitah* before the dawn prayer and does not perform ghusl, then she has to do ghusl before noon prayer and repeat her dawn prayer after the ghusl.

The Kathirah:

A *kathirah* has to change the sanitary napkin before every salat and perform three ghusls - the first before dawn prayer, second before noon and afternoon prayers, and the third before evening and night prayers. It is not wajib for a woman with *istihazah kathirah* to perform wudu' for every salat as the ghusl is sufficient.

If a woman sees *istihazah kathirah* after the dawn prayer, then on that day she has to do two ghusls -one before noon prayer and the other before evening prayer.

If she sees *istihazah kathirah* after afternoon prayer, then on that day she will have to do one ghusl only before the evening prayer.

If she sees *istihazah kathtrah* between noon and afternoon prayers or between evening and night prayers, then on that day she has to perform the ghusl before afternoon or night prayers.

The *mustahazah kathirah* should combine the noon and afternoon prayers after the second ghusl, and also the evening and night prayers after the third ghusl. It means that if a woman performs ghusl before noon prayer and does not combine the recitation of noon and afternoon prayers, then she will have to do a separate ghusl for afternoon prayer also. The same rule applies if she recites the evening and night prayers separately.

4. SOME GENERAL RULES

It is wajib on the *mustahazah*to perform the prayer or prayers immediately after the wudu or ghusl. Of course, she is permitted to perform the mustahab acts before, or during, the prayer.

On the other hand, if the *istihazah*has stopped completely and the woman has already performed what was required of her, then it is not wajib for her to perform her prayers immediately after the wudu or ghusl.

It is also wajib on the *mustahazah*to prevent the blood from coming out of the vagina during the prayer by placing a sanitary napkin over it. If she does not take necessary precaution in this matter and the blood comes out of vagina during the prayer, then she will have to repeat her prayer. In this case of negligence, if she has medium or profuse *istihazah,* then it is precautionarily wajib on her even to repeat the ghusl or ghusls.

If the *istihazah*stops completely before the woman has performed the wudu or ghusl which was required of her, then what is her duty in regard to those acts?

It is wajib for her to perform the acts which were required of her before she became pure. Likewise, if the blood stops during the wudu or ghusl or salat, it is wajib on her to perform the wudu or ghusl or the prayer again. Even if the blood stops after she has performed her prayers but there still is enough time to do wudu or ghusl and pray, then it is wajib for the woman to perform those acts again.

If a *mustahazah*knows that the bleeding will stop at a time when she will have enough time to perform her wudu or ghusl and pray (without making them *qaza*), then it is wajib for her to delay her prayers until she becomes pure. For example, the time of noon and afternoon prayers ends at 5:00 p.m. and the woman has a feeling that her blood will stop before 3:00 or 4:00 p.m. In this case she should delay her noon and afternoon prayers, and perform the wudu or ghusl and pray after she has become pure.

On the other hand, if her *istihazah*started after the time of prayers while she had not yet prayed, then she will have to pray that salat after performing the wudu or ghusl which is required of her. For example, the time of noon prayer commenced at 12:30 p.m. and her *istihazah* started at 3:00 p.m. In this case she had had enough time from the commencement of noon prayer's time to perform her prayers normally. If she did not do so, then she will have to follow the rules of *istihazah* to perform that prayer.

If the discharge changes from one level to the other, then what should a *mustahazah* do?
If it changes from a lower level to a higher level (e.g., from slight to medium bleeding, or from medium to profuse bleeding), then there are two possibilities:

1. The change occured before performing the acts required of her, then she should perform those acts according to the rules of the higher level *istihazah*, and there is no need to repeat the previous acts of worship.

2. The change occured while she was performing the acts which were required of her, then she has to start those acts all over again according to the rules of the higher level *istihazah*. This law applies even if the change occurs during prayers.

If it changes from a higher level to a lower level (e.g., from profuse to medium bleeding, or from medium to slight bleeding), then the *mustahazah* will have to follow the rules of the higher level *istihazah* for the first prayer and then follow the rules of the lower level *istihazah* for the subsequent prayers. For example, a *mustahazah* kathirah becomes *mustahazah qalilah* before noon, then she will have to perform a ghusl and then pray noon and afternoon prayer (according to the rules of kathirah) but for evening and night prayers she just has to perform separate *wudu's* (according to the rules of qalfiah).

5. HOW THE *MUSTAHAZAH*SHOULD FAST?

The *mustahazah* has to pray and fast like every other woman. The only difference is that her acts of worship will not be valid unless she observes the rules mentioned above.

In case of the women with medium *istihazah*, the validity of their fasts is dependent upon the ghusl which they are required to perform before the dawn prayer. (This rule is based on ihtiyat mustahab-precautionarily recommendation.)

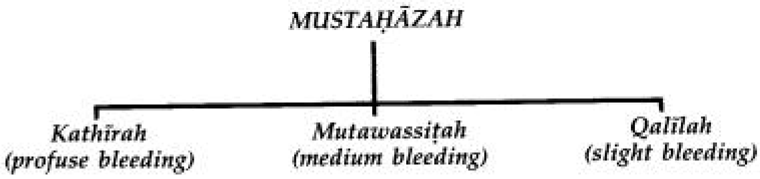
The validity of the fasts of the women with profuse *istihazah* depends on the ghusls which they are required to perform during the entire day.

6. IS ANYTHING FORBIDDEN TO THE *MUSTAHAZAH?*

Among the acts forbidden to the ha'iz and junub, only one is forbidden for *mustahazah*: She is not permitted to touch the writings of the Qur'an before w*udu* and ghusl. Rather even after the wudu and ghusl, it is precautionarily wajib on her to refrain from touching the writings of the Qur'an.

Of course, there is no harm if a *mustahazah* woman enters and stays inside a mosque or reads those parts of the Qur'an which have wajib sajdahs.

There is no restriction, whatsoever, on sexual intercourse for a *mustahazah* with slight bleeding. As far as the *mustahazah* with medium and profuse bleeding are concerned, sexual intercourse is lawful only if they have performed the ghusl or ghusls which are required of them. (This rule is based on precautionarily recommendation.)



DEFNITION OF NIFAS - POST NATAL BLEEDING

1. DEFINITION OF *NIFAS*

Nifas literally means "childbed, childbirth, parturition." In the Islamic legal terminology, it means "the blood which is discharged from a woman's womb during or after the childbirth." The blood discharged during the travail is not regarded as nifas.

In the present context the word *nifas is* usually translated as "post-natal bleeding." The woman who has *nifas* is known as *na*fsa'.

The blood which is discharged from a woman's womb after a miscarriage is also *ni*fas.

There is no minimum duration for *nifas.* Even if only a drop of blood is discharged during or after childbirth, it will be regarded as *nifas.*

As far as the period of occurance is concerned, any blood which is discharged within ten days of childbirth is *nifas. So* if a woman who saw no blood during or after the childbirth sees blood nine days later, that blood will still be regarded as *nifas.*

The maximum duration of *nifas is* ten days from the time of completion of childbirth or from the commencement of the bleeding. So if a woman sees blood at childbirth and it continues for ten days, all those days will be *nifas.* On the other hand, if a woman sees blood on the seventh day after the childbirth and it continues for ten days, then up to the end of the tenth day from
the childbirth she will consider herself in *nifas;* and for the remaining period (i.e., up to 17th day from the childbirth) she will act on precaution - avoiding all things forbidden to a *nafsa',* and doing all that is required of a *mustahadah.*

When it is said "from the time of childbirth", it means after the "complete" delivery of the child.

There is no minimum duration between two *nifas.* For example, a woman who gave birth to twins who were born at five days interval, sees blood for 5 days after the first child and then it stops, and again she sees blood after the second child's birth - then the two bleedings will be counted as two separate *nifas.*

2. THREE TYPES OF *NAFSA'*

1. A woman whose post-natal bleeding does not exceed ten days. In such a case all the days of bleeding will be considered *nifas.*

2. A woman whose post-natal bleeding exceeds ten days and, as far as her menstrual cycles are concerned, she is a *zatu 'l-'adah* with a fixed number of days. In this case the days equal to the duration of her menstruation will be regarded as *nifas*and the remaining days as *istihazah.*

3. A woman whose post-natal bleeding exceeds ten days and she is not a *zatu 'l-'adah.* In this case she should look at the duration of her relatives' menstruation and then consider the same number of days as her *nifas.* If the duration of her relatives' menses is less than ten, then (a) she should count those days as *nifas* and (b) after that she should act on precaution up to the tenth day.

3. SOME GENERAL RULES

A *nafsa'*sees blood on the first day of the childbirth and then it stops and then again it starts on or before the tenth day. In this case there are two possibilites:

(a) The second bleeding does not exceed the tenth day from the commencement of the first flow-both the flows and the pause between them will be regarded as one *nifas.* Of course, it is precautionarily better to act on precaution during the pause.

(b) The second bleeding exceeds the tenth day from the commencement of the first flow. This again has four possibilities:-

i. The woman has a fixed number of days for her menstrual cycles, and the second flow took place within the fixed number: For example, her menses usually continues for seven days; now she saw blood of *nifas* for two days from the childbirth, then it stopped, and re-started again on the sixth day and continued exceeding the tenth day. Then the first flow, the pause and the second bleeding within the fixed number (i.e, upto the seventh day after childbirth), will be regarded as one *nifas* and the remaining days will be *istihazah.*

ii. The woman has a fixed duration for her menstrual cycles, but the second flow did not take place during the fixed duration - then the first flow will be *nifas,* the pause will be regarded as a period of purity and the second flow will be regarded as *istihazah.*

iii. The woman does not have a fixed pattern for her menstrual cycles, and the second flow started during the fixed duration of her relatives' monthly periods - then the days equal to the duration of her relatives' monthly periods will be *nifas*and the remaining *istihazah.* Of course, if the duration of her relatives' periods is less than ten days then she should act on precaution after the last day up to the tenth day.

iv. The woman does not have a fixed pattern for her menstrual cycles, and the second flow started after the fixed duration of her relatives' monthly periods - then the first flow will be *nifas;* and during the pause and the second flow she should act on precaution up to the tenth day.

When the *nifas* stops but the *nafsa'*is uncertain whether or not it has stopped completely, then she should examine herself just as a *hayz* was required to do in similar circumstances. (See page 13 for details.)

4. PRE-NATAL BLEEDING

As mentioned in part one, it is possible for a pregnant woman to have menstruation.

Salman al-Farsi asked Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) about the sustenance of a child in its mother's womb. The Imam said, "Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala,* preserves the (blood of) menstruation for him and makes it into his sustenance in his mother's womb." Sulayman bin Khdlid asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq that, "Does a pregnant woman have her monthly period sometimes?" The Imam said, "Yes; and that is because the food of a child in the womb of its mother is the blood. Sometimes the blood is in abundance and is in excess (to his need); and when it is in excess, it is shed out; and when it is shed out (she is regarded as a *ha'iz* and) she is not allowed to perform salat. " [1]

In this chapter we shall discuss the nature of the blood seen during pregnancy.

If a pregnant woman sees blood and she is sure that it is the menstrual flow, then she should consider it as menstruation.

But if she does not know whether it is *hayz* or *istihazah,* then there may be three possibilites:-
(1) The discharge has the three signs of *hayz* and it came during or aroung the fixed number of days, then she should consider it as *hayz.*

(2) The discharge does not have the three signs nor did it come during or around the fixed number of days, then she should consider it as *istihazah.*

(3) The discharge has the three, signs but it did not come during or around the fixed number of days or vice verse, then she should act on precaution.

If a pregnant woman sees blood just a few days before the childbirth, then there are four possibilities:

(1) The bleeding continues up to the child birth and she knows that it is menstruation and it has the three signs, then it will be regarded as menstruation.

(2) The bleeding continues up to the childbirth but she does not know that it is menstruation - then if it has the three signs or it occured during the fixed time of her menses, it is *hayz;* otherwise it will be considered as *istihazah.*

(3) The bleeding stopped ten days before the childbirth - then if it has the three signs, it will be regarded as menstruation; otherwise it is *istihazah.*

(4) The bleeding stopped during the ten days prior to the childbirth - then if it has the three signs or it occured during the fixed time, it will be regarded as menstruation; otherwise it will be considered as *istihazah.*

5. THE THINGS FORBIDDEN TO THE *NAFSA'*

The things which were fobidden to the *hayz* are also forbidden to the *nafsa*'.

She is forbidden from touching the Qur'an. Staying in a mosque or putting something in it is not allowed to her; passing through a mosque is only allowed if she enters from one door and without stopping goes out of another. But she cannot even pass

through the Sacred Mosque of Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque at Medina. She cannot recite the verses of sajdah. And sexual intercourse with her is forbidden.

She is also excused from salat. Like a *hayz,* she is not even required to perform them as *qaza*. She is also exempted from fasting, but in this case she has to fast afterwards as *qaza*.

6. *GHUSL U'N-NIFAS*

When a woman becomes pure from *nifas,* it is wajib for her to perform ghusl. Apart from sexual intercourse, all the acts forbidden to her will remain so until she performs *ghuslu 'n-nifas.*

The manner of performing *ghuslu 'n-nifas* is same as explained in part one of this book.

Notes:
[1] al-'Amili, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 579

GLOSSARY

Wajib-obligatory, necessary, incumbent. An act which must be performed. You will be rewarded for performing it and punished for neglecting it, e.g., the daily prayers, the fasting of Ramadhan.

Ihtiyat wajib-precuationarily obligatory. Its significance is the same as that of *wajib* with the difference that in the rules where a *mujtahid* says it is "precautionarily obligatory", you have the option of leaving his *taqlid* (following) in that particular problem, and following the rulings of the second-best *mujtahid* in that problem.

Mustabab, Sunnat-recommendable, desirable, better. The acts whose neglect is not punished, but whose performance is rewarded, e.g., the call of prayer *(adhan).*

Ihtiyat mustabab-precautionarily recommended. Its significance is the same as that of *mustahab.* When a *mujtahid* uses this term, he means that there is no solid proof for that particular act being mustahab, but his standards of precaution demand that it be considered as *mustahab.*

Ja'iz, Halal, Mubah-permitted**,** allowed, lawful, legal. The act or the thing which is permitted and lawful. There is no reward for performing it and no punishment for neglecting it, e.g., drinking tea. *Mubdh is* mostly used for lawful things, not for permitted actions.

Makruh-reprehensible, disliked. The acts whose performance is not punished, but whose avoidance is rewarded, e.g., eating in the state of *janabat.*

Haram-forbidden, prohibited. It is necessary to abstain from the acts which are *haram.* If someone performs a *haram* act, he will be punished, e.g., eating pork.

Junub-a man or a woman who has become *najis* (impure) because of sexual intercourse or, in the former's case, because of discharge of semen.

Sajdah-prostration.

Qaza-performing an act of worship which was missed during its proper time.

Musalla-place or mattress of prayers.

Rak'at-a bending of torso from an upright position in prayers.